

Confronting English Speaking Anxiety: A Qualitative Study of Jordanian Undergraduates at Zarqa University

Rashad Faleh Alhasan

Translation Department, Saif Bin Zayed Academy for Police Science and Security, UAE

Ibrahim Fathi Huwari

Department of English, University of Petra, Amman, Jordan

Marwan Harb Alqaryouti

Department of English Language, Literature and Translation, Zarqa University, Zarqa, Jordan

Ala Eddin Sadeq

Department of English Language, Literature and Translation, Zarqa University, Zarqa, Jordan

Ali Ata Alkhaldi

Liberal Arts Department, American University of the Middle East, Kuwait

Kamal Ahmad Alruzzi

Department of English Language, Literature and Translation, Zarqa University, Zarqa, Jordan

Abstract—Oral communication plays a pivotal role in language learning. Although essential, many learners of English as a second language face distinct challenges when speaking. This qualitative research aimed to investigate and understand the coping strategies Jordanian students use to manage and alleviate their English Language Speaking Anxiety (ELSA) in both classroom and non-classroom environments. Fifteen undergraduate students from Zarqa Private University's (ZU) English Language Department in Jordan were selected for the study. A qualitative research approach was adopted to gather insights into the students' views and methods for dealing with their anxiety about speaking English, whether in class with instructors or in more casual settings. The findings of this study revealed that undergraduates at ZU employed five key coping strategies to manage and reduce speaking anxiety when using the English language. These strategies are self-regulation, self-confidence, a supportive environment, practice/preparation, and humor. The findings revealed that students who faced unavoidable communication scenarios adopted self-soothing techniques to mitigate the effects of ELSA.

Index Terms—English language, speaking anxiety, Zarqa University, undergraduates

I. INTRODUCTION

Communication is an essential life skill necessary for personal and professional success. However, many people struggle with speaking anxiety, which is defined as the fear or apprehension associated with communication situations (McCroskey, 1984). For students, speaking anxiety can be particularly challenging, especially when they are required to give presentations or participate in group discussions. Research has shown that up to 75% of college students experience some form of speaking anxiety (Johannsen & Korsgaard, 2017). To achieve language proficiency, it is essential to master the four key skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Among these, researchers have identified speaking as the most important and valuable skill in learning English (Hajar, 2019; Huwari, 2019; Zughoul & Taminian, 1984; Saed et al., 2021). Studies indicate that a lack of confidence, often stemming from a perceived inadequate level of English proficiency, can lead to anxiety in foreign language learners (Alrabai, 2017; Huwari & Hashima, 2010; as cited in Alkhaldi et al., 2023). Additionally, speaking anxiety can be a significant obstacle for students. Mulyono (2019) stated, "Uncontrolled foreign language speaking anxiety can exceptionally influence EFL learners' existing speaking performances, achievements, and motivation impactful for their continual communicative growth. Learners ingraining a higher degree of foreign language speaking anxiety are more liable to communicate less owing to the excessive perturbation, negative emotions, and incapability in amplifying their self-confidence".

The study involved Jordanian undergraduate students pursuing an English language and literature program at ZU. It revealed that a certain level of language proficiency is necessary to handle the linguistic demands of their academic

pursuits effectively. The study also found that students who used coping strategies were likelier to succeed academically. These coping strategies can be effective in helping Jordanian undergraduate students cope with the linguistic and academic challenges of learning English. The effectiveness of these strategies may vary depending on the individual student's needs and preferences. This study examines their methods to cope with or reduce the linguistic and academic difficulties arising from ESA.

Problem statement

Speaking skills is an integral part of language learning because it allows students to communicate with others verbally. It is also a way for students to express their thoughts, ideas, and feelings (Pakpahan & Gultom, 2021). Speaking skills can be improved through practice and listening to others speak (Alhasan et al., 2024; Saldaria et al., 2019).

Speaking serves as a vital means of communication, enabling individuals to express their ideas, foster relationships, and engage in personal development (Raja, 2017). According to Suparlan (2021), the enthusiasm of certain EFL learners for acquiring communicative competence significantly influences their determination and success in becoming future professionals. Conversely, a negative experience in speaking instruction can severely reduce EFL learners' motivation, self-confidence, and dedication to improving their proficiency in the target language. This challenging learning environment arises from the learners' heightened levels of foreign language speaking anxiety (Huwari et al., 2023).

Arab students experience high levels of speaking anxiety when speaking English, which can negatively affect their language learning and academic performance (Alahmadi & Aljohanim, 2021). ESA among Jordanian undergraduate students needs to receive more attention from researchers. There needs to be a greater understanding of the problems faced by these students and the coping strategies they use. Jordanian undergraduate students have substantial levels of oral language anxiety in both formal and informal settings, which inhibits them from undertaking smooth communications with English. (Alhasan et al., 2023). The methods students use to manage their anxiety when speaking English are vital for improving their language proficiency and overall learning experience. Therefore, this study examined the coping mechanisms that Jordanian students at ZU utilize to address their fear of speaking English as a foreign language and identified recommended strategies for the university to implement.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Speaking anxiety (SA) is a fear of interacting with others verbally. Various factors, including learned behaviors, innate traits, and genetic predispositions, can contribute to its development. SA can manifest in both mild and severe forms, hindering an individual's ability to communicate effectively in social, academic, and professional contexts. Individuals can implement several strategies to manage SA, such as practicing relaxation techniques, visualizing success, setting attainable goals, rewarding themselves for their achievements, confiding in a trusted individual, and seeking professional assistance (Abdulraheem, 2022).

According to the standard biological perspective, social anxiety (SA) is a biological trait that, while not curable, can be managed. In contrast, the social learning perspective views SA as a learned behavior that can be unlearned. Hazel et al. (2014) summarized the distinction between these two viewpoints. The social learning perspective advocates for SA interventions as a potential cure, positing that individuals with high social anxiety (CA) are capable of benefiting from treatment. Conversely, the standard biological perspective regards SA as a trait and considers interventions as a means to mitigate its lifelong effects.

On the other hand, the standard biological view views SA as a trait and sees interventions as an aid to reduce its lifelong effects. The social learning view of social anxiety (SA) suggests that SA can be learned through a process of classical conditioning. This means that SA can be learned through association, whereby a neutral stimulus (e.g., public speaking) is paired with an aversive stimulus (e.g., anxiety). Over time, the neutral stimulus (public speaking) elicits the aversive response (anxiety).

The standard biological perspective on social anxiety (SA) posits that it is a biological characteristic shaped by both genetic and environmental influences. In other words, SA arises from the interaction of these factors. Since McCroskey introduced the concept of communication anxiety (CA) in the 1970s, researchers have explored its origins, treatments, experiences, and effects on students' academic performance and success. SA can negatively impact students' academic outcomes. For instance, students with high levels of SA may be less inclined to engage in classroom discussions, ask questions, or participate in presentations, which may result in lower grades and lost learning opportunities.

Several things can be done to help students overcome SA. One is to provide them with practical communication skills training. This can help them feel more confident and prepared when communicating with others. Another is to create a supportive and encouraging classroom environment where students feel comfortable speaking up. According to a study by Alhasan et al. (2023), Jordanian students displayed seven types of anxious behaviors linked to speaking English, categorized into two major psychological groups: Fear of negative evaluation, reduced social, concerns about employability, diminished self-confidence, and disorganized thinking. Al-Khawaldeh and Al-Ali (2021) looked at the fear of speaking among Arab students enrolled in American universities. According to the study, Arab students have significant levels of speaking anxiety in English-speaking settings, which might hurt their ability to integrate socially and academically in their new nation. Arab students may have speaking anxiety due to a lack of exposure to English outside of the classroom, apprehension about receiving a poor grade, and cultural communication gaps. According to the study, language teachers should employ communicative language teaching (CLT) strategies that prioritize interaction and

teamwork, allow students to practice speaking in a safe setting, and provide feedback and encouragement to lower speaking anxiety and improve language learning outcomes.

Alzu'bi and Alsheikh (2021) studied how Jordanian students learning English as a foreign language (EFL) cope with anxiety related to public speaking. The study found that these students employ various coping strategies to manage their anxiety, such as avoiding the situation, seeking social support, changing their thinking patterns, and using relaxation techniques. The study also revealed that the effectiveness of these strategies varied depending on the level of anxiety and the context in which it was experienced. The authors suggest that language teachers educate their students about coping mechanisms for speaking anxiety and provide guidance on appropriate coping strategies. They also recommend adopting a learner-centered approach to teaching speaking skills, which can help reduce speaking anxiety and improve language learning outcomes.

Language teachers have used the strategies and techniques recommended by numerous research to lower language anxiety in students learning English as a foreign language (EFL). Donley (1997) divided these strategies into four categories: (1) language-related activities and programs; (2) methods that encourage emotional self-regulation by increasing students' awareness of and control over their emotions; (3) strategies to deepen students' understanding of the nature of language learning; and (4) suggestions for lowering anxiety levels in language classes.

III. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to investigate the coping mechanisms used by students at Zarqa University in Jordan to overcome their fear of English Speaking Anxiety (ESA). The study was conducted using a qualitative case study approach. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences and perspectives of participants. Interviews were conducted with 15 students from the English Language department at Zarqa University. According to Creswell et al. (2017), qualitative research aims to understand people's thoughts, opinions, and impressions of a phenomenon or experience.

A. Research Instrument

Interviews served as the main research tool in this study. The study employed this approach to compile in-depth and complex data regarding students' ESA coping mechanisms. Since they enable researchers to examine participants' thoughts and experiences in their own words, interviews are essential for qualitative investigations. Additionally, the open-ended interview format allows researchers to go deeper into participants' experiences and collect valuable data. Interviews were performed as part of this study to understand the experiences and coping mechanisms of students at Zarqa University dealing with ESA.

B. Data Analysis

The researchers used content analysis to examine the data gathered for this study. In order to do this, the audio recordings of the interviews had to be converted into text, and the major themes and underlying themes that arose from the data had to be noted. During the data coding phase, the themes and sub-themes considered pertinent to the study's phenomenological data were highlighted, circled, and color-coded to ensure correctness. Saldana (2013) asserts that researchers might find patterns and connections in the data through this technique. Following the method described by Glaser and Strauss (1967), the linguistic categories were then condensed into themes and sub-themes associated with apprehensive oral communication.

C. Sample of the Study

A study was conducted at Zarqa University in Jordan to investigate the coping strategies used by Jordanian undergraduate students from the English Language Department to overcome their experiences of speaking anxiety. The study used a purposeful sampling approach to select 15 participants who were hesitant to speak English. The participants were interviewed to collect data about their experiences of speaking anxiety and the coping strategies they used to deal with it. The relevance of the study and its contribution to bettering language instruction were explained to the participants, who were also assured that they would maintain their anonymity and that they could withdraw whenever they felt it was necessary (Braggs, 2017).

D. Research Questions

The following research questions were formed to explore the processes and strategies used by Jordanian undergraduate students at Zarqa University to cope with and reduce their ESA.

1. What strategies do students use to overcome or reduce their English anxiety and improve their English proficiency?

IV. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Based on the analysis of the data collected from interviews with Jordanian undergraduate students from the English Language Department at Zarqa University, several themes emerged regarding their coping mechanisms and strategies for dealing with speaking anxiety. The students reported using various coping mechanisms, such as self-regulation and self-

confidence, which involved controlling their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors to reduce their anxiety levels. Students also sought a supportive environment from peers and instructors for encouragement and feedback to improve their speaking skills. Practice/preparation and a sense of humor enhanced their confidence and reduced anxiety levels during communication.

A. *Self-Regulation*

Self-regulation refers to controlling one's thoughts, emotions, and behaviors to achieve desired outcomes or goals. Self-regulation is a crucial skill in language learning that can help students manage their language anxiety and improve their performance. Students who can regulate their emotions and behavior can use coping strategies, including positive self-talk, relaxation techniques, and goal-setting, to manage their anxiety. In addition, self-regulated learners are more likely to engage in metacognitive processes, such as monitoring their learning progress and adapting their study strategies to achieve better results. Research has shown that teaching self-regulation strategies can effectively help students manage their language anxiety and improve their language proficiency. The consequences of failing, speaking in front of an audience, and feeling uneasiness during language tests are the main factors that cause students to be stressed (Ravshanovna, 2023).

"Before speaking in class, I attempt to manage my breathing and relax. Before answering a question, I sometimes take a few deep breaths and count to ten".

"I listen to the Quran before class to get in the right frame of mind." It makes me feel more prepared and confident" (Participant 7).

"I try to converse with native speakers outside of class, such as at a language exchange event or with international students." It allows me to practice and become accustomed to diverse dialects and speaking styles" (Participant 1).

"I remind myself that making mistakes is normal and necessary for learning." It makes me less nervous about speaking out in class" (Participant 5).

"During class, I take notes and write down key phrases or vocabulary that I can use later when speaking." It makes me feel more prepared and less worried about what to say" (Participant 13).

B. *Self-Confidence*

The data collected from the interviews with Jordanian undergraduate students from the English Language Department at Zarqa University revealed that self-confidence emerged as a critical theme in coping with ESA. Participants recognized the importance of self-confidence in reducing ESA levels, believing that it could help them overcome the adverse effects during presentations or group discussions.

Participants' responses further identified positive thinking, specifically "self-motivation," as a cognitive strategy for managing ESA. Positive thinking involves using their minds to develop confidence when communicating in English. While only three participants mentioned it, positive thinking encouraged self-motivation to confront speaking apprehension successfully.

Participant 15 emphasized the importance of learning and overcoming the fear and anxiety of speaking in front of others. According to Participant 9, building self-confidence is crucial for establishing new relationships with people. Participant 6 highlighted the need to trust oneself and face the initial apprehension when communicating in English. In addition, Participant 9 stated that it is essential to have confidence in oneself when facing speaking anxiety. Participant 7 received advice from a friend to avoid holding a paper during presentations to prevent the audience from noticing any trembling in their hands.

The following extracts from the participants highlight the view:

"Students must attempt to learn and overcome their fear and anxiety of speaking in front of others" (Participant 15).

"You have to trust yourself. As they say, no pain, no gain. We have to face our challenges and fears. We have to force ourselves to speak relationships and enhance our speaking skills." (Participant 9).

"I have been advised by a friend not to hold the paper in my hand while presenting as audiences will see my hand shaking" (Participant 7).

The participants' responses indicate that they strive to manage their English-speaking anxiety (ESA) by developing self-confidence. Students with ESA can manage their anxiety by building self-assurance. When students have faith in themselves, they are less likely to feel anxious or nervous when speaking in front of others. Jordanian students experienced

substantial psychological pressure during speaking tasks and employed different processes to minimize their oral communication in English. Their main motivation was to protect their self-confidence and self-esteem, which were severely threatened by oral situations (Alhasan et al., 2024).

C. Practice/Preparation

Preparing and rehearsing is an effective strategy for coping with ESA, according to the participants in the study. Many students shared that they would prepare themselves before participating in class discussions or presentations, which helped to improve their confidence levels and reduce anxiety. Preparation is identified as one of the most effective strategies for managing ESA, and twelve out of fifteen participants used this technique to reduce their anxiety when practicing their speaking skills. The participants in the study found that preparing and rehearsing helped them feel more confident and prepared when communicating in front of others. The participants participated in various activities to improve their communication skills, such as listening more intently, speaking more often, reading, taking classes, and studying diligently.

The following extracts from the interviews highlight the students' narration of the way they apply this strategy to manage their ESA experience in different communication contexts.

"I usually prepare by thinking about the topic and mentally practicing what I want to say." I often practice in front of a mirror to check my appearance and whether I am making odd facial expressions" (Participant 8).

"Whenever I have to give a presentation, I practice at home beforehand." I record myself speaking and review it to see where I can improve. This makes me feel more secure regarding the present" (Participant 12).

"I find it useful to write out what I want to say beforehand and then practice saying it aloud." This makes me feel more structured and prepared, reducing the likelihood of me stumbling over my words" (Participant 15).

The above narrations demonstrate that students in ZU use preparation as a coping mechanism for ESA. They describe various techniques, such as mental rehearsal, practicing in front of a mirror, recording and reviewing their presentations, and writing and practicing what they want to say. Through these strategies, students aim to improve their confidence levels and reduce anxiety associated with communication. The participants' emphasis on preparation highlights the importance of investing time and effort into honing their speaking skills to manage their ESA experience.

D. Supportive Environment

Students who experience Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety (ESA) usually look for a supportive environment where they can practice speaking English without feeling judged, feel safe, and comfortable taking risks and making mistakes. They often rely on external social support as a coping mechanism to manage their anxiety levels. Seeking emotional and practical support from friends, teachers, or family members is a typical strategy these students adopt. Emotional support can include seeking comfort from friends or instructors, while practical support may involve seeking assistance in language learning. Family members can also provide inspiration and assistance. Research has shown that seeking social support is an effective way to alleviate language anxiety. Seeking social support helped reduce language anxiety levels (Horwitz et al., 1986).

"I discuss language learning with my classmates and offer advice on developing speaking abilities. This makes my challenges feel less isolated" (Participant 11).

"I try to talk to my friends who speak English better than me, and they give me some advice on how to improve my speaking skills and reduce my anxiety" (Participant 14).

"After class, I always seek assistance from my teachers." They provide me with comments and constructive criticism, which helps me improve my public speaking skills and gain confidence" (Participant 7).

"I occasionally practice speaking English with family members or friends who struggle with it to encourage one another" (Participant 8).

"I sometimes use social media to find people who speak English fluently. This way, I can practice my speaking skills with them, or at least I can imitate them" (Participant 3).

The comments above highlight social support as a strategy for managing anxiety among some of the students interviewed. Some students reported that they were able to manage their anxiety by utilizing social support. They found that having friends, family, and teachers who supported their efforts to learn English helped them feel less anxious and more motivated. This, in turn, helped them to become more proactive in their language learning and to reduce their anxiety levels.

E. Sense of Humor

Humor and anxiety are two concepts that are closely linked when it comes to public speaking. Many people find public speaking to be a terrifying experience, and anxiety can make it even more difficult. However, incorporating humor into a presentation can be an excellent method of dealing with speaking anxiety. A sense of humor can help speakers connect with their audience and make their speech more engaging and memorable. Additionally, finding humor in a situation can help to reduce stress and develop a positive mindset. As a result, a sense of humor can be a valuable tool for dealing with fear and making public speaking more enjoyable and successful. The participants described their use of this approach as follows:

“I usually try to create a positive environment for myself by using a sense of humor. It is changing my mood” (Participant 6).

“I realized that humor was a way for me to connect with my audience. By making them laugh, I felt nothing scared me” (Participant 10).

“If I am scared and worried, I will always try to make the audience laugh; I found that I could relax and enjoy the experience. It also helped me remember what I wanted to say” (Participant 3).

Humor can be an effective strategy for managing anxiety and improving performance in public speaking. A study by Bitterly (2018) found that speakers who incorporated humor into their presentations experienced less anxiety and were perceived as more competent and persuasive by their audience. However, practice makes perfect when using humor in public speaking, as noted by Lydon and Buckner (2022). The study participants also discussed their use of unique and humorous strategies to manage their anxiety during presentations, such as adopting an alternate persona and pretending to be confident. Bragg (2017) describes this technique as taking on a particular role or feigning confidence during communication. While these strategies can be helpful, using them in moderation and with appropriate judgment is essential to maintain professionalism and credibility during public speaking. Incorporating humor and adopting an alternate persona can lead to successful public speaking and effective communication.

V. DISCUSSION

What strategies are used by Jordanian students at ZU to reduce ESA? The research was conducted to identify the strategies students in ZU used to manage ESA during communication. The students were asked to describe the strategies they used to manage their English-speaking anxiety (ESA). The literature on ESA was also consulted to identify additional strategies that could be used to minimize or control ESA, such as corrective feedback and visualization.

Bowman (2018) and Bragg (2017) suggest that corrective feedback and visualization are two effective strategies for managing ESA. Corrective feedback involves providing students with feedback on their English-speaking skills, such as grammar and pronunciation. Visualization involves having students imagine themselves speaking English fluently and confidently. Alruzzi and Yunus (2019b) stated, “To produce a specific effect in language, speakers deviate and shift from the semantic norm. Therefore, figurative shift is a mechanism of semantic change”.

The students described various strategies they used to manage ESA during communication scenarios. These strategies included self-regulation, self-confidence, a supportive environment, practice/preparation, and humor. The students' customized techniques were identified by describing how they managed their ESA. Students have reported voluntarily engaging in activities and classes that involve other students. They believe that this will help them improve their English language speaking skills, which will, in turn, reduce their ESA.

The findings revealed that building self-confidence is an effective strategy for managing ESA. When students have confidence in their abilities, they feel more capable of handling communication situations, even in the presence of ESA. This allows them to focus on and deliver their message effectively rather than being distracted by anxiety or nervousness. Encouraging self-confidence-building strategies should be essential to language learning curriculums to help students overcome ESA. This result tallied with the findings of the research by Choi et al. (2015) and Marshall (1996), who found that students who received coaching on building their self-confidence could reduce their anxiety levels and improve their speaking skills. The coaching included setting realistic goals, celebrating successes, taking risks, and surrounding oneself with positive people.

The students in the study also reported seeking support from others, such as friends, family members, and teachers. They would ask for feedback and constructive criticism to improve their public speaking skills and reduce anxiety. Some students also turned to social media to find people who spoke English fluently so that they could practice their speaking skills with them or even imitate their speaking style. These strategies are consistent with previous research, which has shown that practicing and seeking support can effectively reduce ESA in students (Bragg, 2017; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991).

The analysis of the interview data showed that Students at ZU found that practicing and preparing were effective ways to manage their anxiety when communicating in English. They listened to native English speakers and English news channels and practiced speaking English regularly. This strategy was beneficial when students were faced with presentations and group discussions. This strategy is usually adopted when the students face presentations and group discussion scenarios. Alruzzi and Yunus (2019a) stated that “this explains why its compiler does not give the pronunciation, for example, and other information that may not be necessary for them from his point of view”.

Furthermore, the study findings also revealed that the students believed that external motivation, such as being forced to speak by an instructor or teacher, could help them manage their anxiety during communication encounters. They believed this could be done by adopting a self-soothing strategy, such as deep breathing or positive self-talk. The students' descriptions of this strategy suggest that they believed that if one is forced to speak through external pressure from the instructor or teacher and threats of being expelled from the class, one could manage one's level of communication anxiety by adopting a self-soothing strategy. This result corresponds with the findings of Bragg (2017), who found that when students were confronted with unavoidable communication scenarios, they adopted self-soothing techniques to mitigate the effects of communication anxiety.

The study findings also identified how students adopted a humor strategy to cope with English-speaking anxiety (ESA) situations. The humor strategy involves the student pretending to be confident by assuming a specific role or adopting an alternate persona. Bragg (2017) reported a similar ESA mitigation strategy in which students were found to devise self-soothing techniques to minimize ESA. Additionally, participants believed that self-confidence could be a beneficial strategy for overcoming communication anxiety (CA). They believed that one can overcome anxiety and deliver a speech effectively by building self-assurance. These findings are consistent with those of previous studies, such as those conducted by Ravshanovna (2023), Alhasan et al. (2023), Almusharraf (2020), Kristiansen et al. (2019), Liu (2018), Namaziandost et al. (2019), Vakilifard et al. (2020), Yasmin and Sohail (2018), and Zamani and Ahangari (2016). Alruzzi et al. (2022) stated that “English learners as a foreign language around the globe strive to develop their proficiency level in speaking” (p. 2458).

VI. CONCLUSION

The research explored the strategies Jordanian undergraduate students used at ZU to reduce or overcome their ESA. The study used a qualitative research design and interviews to collect data. It looked at the lived experience of students with ESA, with specific reference to their perceived levels of ESA, the strategies they used in mitigating ESA, and the effects of ESA on their academic and social life. The outcome of the research revealed that Jordanian students studying at ZU used various strategies to mitigate the extent of ESA during communication encounters. They used strategies that included self-regulation, self-confidence, a supportive environment, practice/preparation, and the use of humor. The students' customized techniques were identified by describing how they managed their ESA. The results reveal that when confronted with unavoidable communication scenarios, students adopt self-calming techniques to mitigate the effects of ESA.

The study aimed to explore the strategies used by Jordanian undergraduate students at ZU to reduce or overcome their English-speaking anxiety (ESA). The study used a qualitative research design and interviews to collect data. The study looked at the lived experience of students with ESA, with specific reference to their perceived levels of ESA, the strategies they used in mitigating ESA, and the effects of ESA on their academic and social life. The study's findings revealed that Jordanian students studying at ZU used various strategies to mitigate the extent of ESA during communication encounters. These strategies include self-regulation, self-confidence, a supportive environment, practice/preparation, and humor. Self-regulation involves learning to control anxiety by using techniques such as deep breathing and positive self-talk. Self-confidence involves building confidence by practicing speaking English in safe environments, such as with friends or family. A supportive environment involves finding a supportive environment where students feel comfortable speaking English, such as a conversation group or an English-speaking class. Practice/preparation involves practicing speaking English in advance of communication encounters, such as rehearsing a presentation or reading a book in English. The use of humor involves using humor to make communication encounters less stressful. These strategies can be used individually or in combination to help students reduce or overcome their ESA.

The students' customized techniques were identified by describing how they managed their ESA. The findings reveal that when confronted with unavoidable communication scenarios, students adopt self-soothing techniques to mitigate the effects of ESA. The study findings have implications for educators and policymakers interested in helping students with ESA. The findings suggest that various strategies can effectively mitigate ESA and that the most effective strategy for a given student will vary depending on the student's individual needs and preferences.

REFERENCES

- [1] Abdulaheem, S. M. (2022). Duality in English and Arabic: a contrastive study. *Bulletin of Advanced English Studies (BAES)*, 7(2), 33–38 <https://doi.org/10.31559/BAES2022.7.2.2>
- [2] Alahmadi, A. M. (2021). *The Relationship between Body Dysmorphic Disorder and Social Anxiety among Female Nursing Students at King Abdulaziz University* (Doctoral dissertation, Faculty of Nursing, King Abdulaziz University).

- [3] Alhasan, R. F. A., Alkhalidi, A. A., Huwari, I. F. & Abushaaban, H. (2023). Oral Communication Apprehensions among Jordanian Undergraduates in Hashemite University. *Resmilitaris*, 13(2), 2894-2905.
- [4] Alhasan, R. F., Huwari, I. F., Alkhalidi, A. A., Abushaaban, H., Al-Khasawneh, F. M. (2024). Investigating English Speaking Anxiety Among Undergraduate Students at Zarqa University. In: Khamis, R., Buallay, A. (eds) *AI in Business: Opportunities and Limitations. Studies in Systems, Decision and Control*, 516. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-49544-1_33
- [5] Alkhalidi, A. A., Alhasan, R. F., Huwari, I. F., & Abushaaban, H. (2023). Strategies for Reducing Oral Communication Apprehension in English: A Qualitative Study of Jordanian Undergraduates. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 13(7), 1638-1644.
- [6] Almusharraf, N., & Engemann, J. (2020). Postsecondary Instructors' Perspectives on Teaching English as a Foreign Language by Means of a Multimodal Digital Literacy Approach. *International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning (IJET)*, 15(18), 86-107.
- [7] Alruzzi, K., & Yunus, K. (2019a). Arabic Synonyms in Bilingual Arabic-English Dictionaries. *International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change*, 8(9).
- [8] Alruzzi, K., & Yunus, K. (2019b). Creating Discourse Using Figures of Speech in the Speeches of King Abdullah II. *International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change*, 8(9).
- [9] Alruzzi, K., Yunus, K., Habib, M., Sadeq, A., & Alqaryouti, M. (2022). Investigating the Impact of Obstacles on English Speaking Score. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 12(11), 2446-2459.
- [10] Asassfeh, S. M., Al-Shaboul, Y. M., Zuraiq, W., & Alshboul, S. (2011). Lending ears to EFL learners: Language difficulties. *The Australian Educational and Developmental Psychologist*, 28(1), 33-46. <https://doi.org/10.1375/aedp.28.1.33>
- [11] Bodie, G. D. (2010). A racing heart, rattling knees, and ruminative thoughts: Defining, explaining, and treating public speaking anxiety. *Communication Education*, 59(1), 70-105.
- [12] Bowman, A. M. (2018). *The effect of peer practice on communication apprehension in high school students: a quantitative, quasi-experimental, static-group study* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Liberty University.
- [13] Bragg, J. R. Jr. (2017). Communication Apprehension among Community College Students: A Phenomenology. *Electronic Theses and Dissertations*. Paper 3236. Retrieved March 10, 2022, from <https://dc.etsu.edu/etd/3236>
- [14] Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2017). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research* (3rd ed.). LA: Sage.
- [15] Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. Chicago: Aldine Publishing.
- [16] Hajar, A. (2019). Arab sojourner expectations, academic socialisation and strategy use on a pre-sessional English programme in Britain. *Pedagogies: An International Journal*, 15(3), 221-239. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1554480x.2019.1696200>
- [17] Hashim, A. (2020). Malaysian English. In K. Bolton, W. Botha, & A. Kirkpatrick (Eds.), *The Handbook of Asian Englishes* (pp. 355-372). Wiley-Blackwell. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118791882.ch16>.
- [18] Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M. B., & Cope, J. (1986). Foreign language classroom anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal*, 70(2), 125-132.
- [19] Huwari, I. (2019). Problems Faced by Jordanian Undergraduate Students in Speaking in English. *International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change*, 8(9), 203-217.
- [20] Huwari, I. F., Alhammaideh, A. H. J., Alqaryouti, M. H., Ab Rashid, R., Alruzzi, K. A., & Sadeq, A. E. (2023). Demotivation factors for learning English (Students' perspectives). *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 14(4), 1023-1030. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.17507/jltr.1404.20> © 2023 Academy Publication.
- [21] Huwari, I., & Hashima, N. (2010). Oral Communication Apprehension in English among Jordanian Postgraduate Students in Universiti Utara Malaysia. In *Proceedings of the 3rd International Conference on International Studies (ICIS)*, 1-2 December, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Retrieved April 19, 2022, from <http://repo.uum.edu.my/id/eprint/2498>
- [22] Jdetawy, L. F. A. (2011). Problems Encountered by Arab EFL Learners. *Language in India*, 11(3), 19-27.
- [23] Kristiansen, C. B., Kjær, J. N., Hjorth, P., Andersen, K., & Prina, A. M. (2019). Prevalence of common mental disorders in widowhood: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 245, 1016-1023.
- [24] Lapkin, S., & Swain, M. (2000). Task outcomes: A focus on immersion students' use of pronominal verbs in their writing. *Canadian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 3(1-2), 7-22.
- [25] McCroskey, J. C. (1984). What is next for the study of communication apprehension? *Communication Education*, 33(2), 120-126.
- [26] Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1984). Drawing valid meaning from qualitative data: Toward a shared craft. *Educational Researcher*, 13(5), 20-30.
- [27] Namaziandost, E., Neisi, L., Kheryadi, & Nasri, M. (2019). Enhancing oral proficiency through cooperative learning among intermediate EFL learners: English learning motivation in focus. *Cogent Education*, 6(1), 1683933. 1214-1225
- [28] Pakpahan, E. M., & Gultom, I. (2021). Foreign language speaking anxiety in online learning. *J-ELLiT (Journal of English Language, Literature, and Teaching)*, 4(2), 112-123.
- [29] Ravshanovna, A. R. (2023). The Causes and Effects of Language Learning Anxiety. *Central Asian Journal of Literature, Philosophy and Culture*, 4(5), 107-110.
- [30] Saed, H. A., Haider, A. S., Al-Salman, S., & Hussein, R. F. (2021). The use of YouTube in developing the speaking skills of Jordanian EFL University students. *Heliyon*, 7(7). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2021.e07543>
- [31] Saldana, J. (2013). Power and conformity in today's schools. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 3(1), 228-232.
- [32] Saldaria, E., Ariawan, V. A. N., & Cahyani, I. (2019). Speaking skills of elementary school students reviewed by gender. *Jurnal Prima Edukasia*, 7(1), 20-27.
- [33] Tridinanti, G. (2018). The correlation between speaking anxiety, self-confidence, and speaking achievement of Undergraduate EFL students of private university in Palembang. *International Journal of Education and Literacy Studies*, 6(4), 35-39.
- [34] Vakilifard, A., Ebadi, S., Zamani, M., & Sadeghi, B. (2020). Investigating demotivating factors in foreign language learners: The case of non-Iranian Persian learners. *Cogent Education*, 7(1), 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2019.1690232>

- [35] Yasmin, M., & Sohail, A. (2018). A creative alliance between learner autonomy and English language learning: Pakistani university teachers' beliefs. *Creativity Studies*, 11(1), 1-9.
- [36] Zamani, R., & Ahangari, S. (2016). Characteristics of an effective English language teacher (EELT) as perceived by learners of English. *International Journal of Foreign Language Teaching and Research*, 4(14), 69-88.

Rashad Faleh Alhasan is an English Language Legal Translator/interpreter and EFL instructor at Saif bin Zaid Academy for Police and Security Science. His main research interests are oral communication apprehension and speaking difficulties in English language learning, writing apprehension, and translation anxiety.

Ibrahim Fathi Huwari received his PhD in Applied Linguistics from Universiti Utara Malaysia. He is currently an Associate professor at the Department of English Language and Literature at the University of Petra, Jordan. His research interests include language anxiety, writing anxiety/apprehension, sociolinguistics, and psycholinguistics.

Marwan Harb Alqaryouti was born in Zarqa, Jordan in 1969. He is a PhD Candidate of English Language Studies / Literature / Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin / Malaysia. He is currently a Lecturer at Zarqa University / Jordan. His research interest includes Literary Criticism. Dr. Alqaryouti is a member of the Jordanian Translators and Applied Linguists Association and Jordanian Translators.

Ala Eddin Sadeq was born in Zarqa, Jordan, in 1971. He received his PhD in Literature from the University of Rajasthan, India, in 2000. He is currently a Professor at Zarqa University / Jordan. His research interest includes English Literature. Prof. Ala Eddin Sadeq is Vice President of Zarqa University for Academic Affairs. He is a member of the Jordanian Translators and Applied Linguists Association and Jordanian Translators Association.

Ali Ata Alkhaldi is an Assistant Professor of applied linguistics at the American University of the Middle East, Kuwait. He teaches a variety of ESP/EAP courses. Moreover, he is a reviewer of several international journals. He has published many research papers in international journals, and his main research interests are materials development, creativity, creative writing, academic writing, technical writing, discourse analysis, SLA research, TESOL, ESP/EAP, and SLA theories.

Kamal Ahmad Alruzzi was born in Amman, Jordan in 1978. He is a PhD Candidate in English Language Studies / Linguistics / at Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin / Malaysia. He is currently a Lecturer at Zarqa University / Jordan. His research interest includes Language studies. Alruzzi is a member of the Jordanian Translators and Applied Linguists Association and Jordanian Translators Association.